

(e) if not, in what manner the protection of wild animals and plants would be ensured?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (e) India has nearly 46000 species of plants and about 81000 species of known fauna. The poaching and illegal trade of the parts and products both from wild plants and animals are one of the major causes of threat to wildlife. State Governments and various Departments of Central Government are making efforts to control the poaching and illegal trade of parts and products of wild animals. The list of important seizures made since 1996 is annexed. [See Appendix 190, Annexure No. 19] The list includes two seizures of legs viz. that of Jackal and the birds of prey.

The mandatory provisions regarding punishment for hunting of wild animals and illegal trade in wild animals and plants are quite stringent. In case of hunting of endangered species, the term of imprisonment may extend up to six years. The persons indulging in illegal trade of wild animals are punishable for imprisonment which may extend to seven years. There is no upper limit on the fine that the Courts can impose in this regard. There are proposals to make the penalties more stringent.

The punishment in respect of offences related to endangered species of plants may extend to three years imprisonment and fine up to Rs. 25,000/-.

Modernisation of Train Bogies in South India

***197. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:**

DR. RAJA RAMANNA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many trains in South India connecting important cities like Bangalore and Raichur are still using old, improperly maintained bogies for all classes, which are both dangerous and dirty;

(b) whether Government propose to remove such bogies;

(c) if so, what would be the financial commitment; and

(d) how long will it take to implement a modernisation plan, similar to trains in the North?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Replacement of old coaches on age-cum-condition basis is a continuous process and new coaches are added every year. Funds amounting to Rs. 681.91 crores have been provided during the current financial year, i.e. 2000-01, for manufacturing of new coaches.

(d) Indian Railways follow uniform norms to upgrade the coaches in different Zonal Railways covering various regions. Several measures for modernisation of coaches including fitment of air brakes, provision of modern vestibules of UIC type, improved flooring, 110V electrical system in place of 24 Volts system, roof mounted AC package units etc. are being taken in a phased manner within the available resources.

Rail Bridge over Ganga

***198. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to construct Rail bridge over river Ganga near Patna;

(b) if so, what has been the follow-up action in this direction; and

(c) by when Government propose to get the bridge finally constructed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Detailed investigation and final location survey for construction of a railway bridge across river Ganga between Patna and Sonapur have been taken up by M/s. RITES. Model studies are being done by Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee and after their completion, the alignment and configuration of the bridge will get finalised. Once the design and alignment of the bridge is finalised, the cost estimates shall be firmed up and the proposal will be processed for requisite clearances. A provision of Rs. 5 crores has been kept for this work in the Budget 2000-2001. The work would be taken up after these clearances have been received.